

clearly, clearly based on our ability to continue to make progress in the environment.

As President I take no particular pleasure in exercising the power of the veto. I like to get things done. I like to move things forward. I like to work with people who have different ideas in a positive way. But when it comes to protecting our air, our food, our water, I cannot sacrifice America's values and America's future, or America's health and safety. It is important to remember—let me say again, as so many have said—that this current state of affairs that we have endured for over a year now is a drastic aberration from the pattern of a previous generation.

When Jim Florio was in Congress working with Senator Lautenberg and Congressman Torricelli and others on the Superfund legislation, people knew that these were things Republicans and Democrats did together because it was good for America. The natural blessings God gave this country were not given to Democrats or Republicans because of their political party. They were given to people who live on this particular piece of God's good Earth, and we had better go back to protecting them together.

Robert Frost once wrote, "The land was ours before we were the land. Our environment is fundamentally us. Its well-being is ours. And when we revitalize it we nourish our souls and restore our communities." I thank you for coming here today. I thank you for your good citizenship. I ask you in this coming year to exercise that citizenship to make sure that when we leave this Earth it is cleaner and fresher and purer than we found it. That is our fundamental obligation.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:45 p.m. in the Rothman Center Auditorium at Fairleigh Dickinson University. In his remarks, he referred to Frank Mertz, president, Fairleigh Dickinson University, and Mayor John F. Zisa of Hackensack.

Remarks on Receiving the Irish-American of the Year Award in New York City
March 11, 1996

Senator Kennedy, Ambassador Kennedy Smith, Niall O'Dowd, ladies and gentlemen.

Senator Kennedy just told me that I could keep the gift under the new ethics law passed by Congress, and I intend to do it. [Laughter]

To John Hume and Albert Reynolds and all my many friends in the audience, all the distinguished Irish-Americans who are here—mayors, other public officials, leaders of business, to Anjelica Huston and Liam Neeson. It's a great tribute, don't you think, to the versatility of Irishmen that Liam Neeson could make such a big impression wearing a Scottish kilt? [Laughter]

I feel a great deal of gratitude to many here in this audience. It's a great privilege to me to accept this award from one our Nation's most extraordinary Irish-Americans, Jean Kennedy Smith, and your last year's honoree. She had a large hand in the positive developments of the last 3 years. Her commitment was tireless and so was her willingness to pick up the telephone and call the President. [Laughter] She has earned the gratitude of everyone here.

I also want to thank Senator Kennedy, not only for his work on this issue but for standing up for the interests of ordinary Americans and forgotten people here and all over the world for more than three decades now. This country is more in his debt than most will ever know.

I thank Senator Dodd and Congressman King and Congressman Manton and the other Members of the United States Congress who have stood for the cause of Ireland. I'm delighted to be here with a number of the Irish-Americans in my administration who are among those being honored tonight: Secretary of Education, Dick Riley; the Peace Corps Director, Mark Gearan; those on the White House staff, Kitty Higgins, Katie McGinty, Susan Brophy, Nancy Soderberg, who wanted to put an "O" and an apostrophe in front of her last name, so as not to be questioned, I want to thank Niall for what he said about Nancy Soderberg and Tony Lake. They also had a very profound role in the work that our administration was able to do.

I would also, since I'm here in New York, like to begin with something that's not in my notes. I was a young student in England when the Troubles began. And as an American acutely aware of his Irish roots, I was

deeply interested in it and troubled by it. But time took me in a different direction. I went back home, I lived a different life, I missed a lot of what happened between then and 4 years ago.

My second Irish journey really began here in New York City, and at least three of those who took me on it are here tonight, and I'd like to thank them for what they did. My law school friend and longtime friend, former Congressman Bruce Morrison, Congressman Tom Manton and Paul O'Dwyer. Thank you, Bruce; thank you, Tom; thank you, Paul.

We all know that we come tonight in celebration that is not as unambiguous as we might have hoped. We come here to face the continuing challenge of our Irish heritage. Tonight, in the land of our ancestors, the future once again is at a crossroads. And, once again, each of us must do our part to safeguard the promise, the precious promise of peace.

This matters to America, to all who believe that those children have a right to grow up free of fear. That is why we have worked so closely with all of the parties and the people on all sides of the conflict—the Catholics, the Protestants, the Nationalists, the Unionists, the Irish, and the British—that is why I granted a visa to Gerry Adams and why I hosted the White House Conference on Trade and Investment, why we were the first administration ever to support the International Fund for Ireland, why I was willing to ask our remarkable natural resource, former Senator George Mitchell, to go and stick his hand in the wheel, and why I became the first President sitting in office to visit Northern Ireland last year.

As Senator Kennedy was talking about President Kennedy's trip there, I couldn't help remembering those days, even though they deprived me because of what we were trying to do to make peace in Bosnia, of the opportunity to play Ballybunion—they were still the best days of my life. *[Laughter]*

And when I came home with the seared, vivid memories of the faces of the people in the Shankills and the Falls, lining the roads to greet us as we made our way through town, the men and women of both traditions on the floor at Mackie's Plant, the two little children, one Catholic and one Protestant

who introduced me and who have now been to visit me in the Oval Office, the crowd I saw in Derry, all the music I heard, all the things I saw, I realized that in my life I might never have 2 days like that again. But I also realized that the romance of the moment cannot strip us of the keen awareness that the work is not yet done.

The people of Northern Ireland have clearly chosen peace. They have chosen dialog over division. They do not deserve to have a small group choose bloodshed and violence and shatter their dreams. And we must not allow those who have been hardened by the past to hijack the future of the children of Northern Ireland.

I want to say, as I have on many occasions, how much I appreciate the risks that have been taken and the efforts that have been made by both the Irish and British Governments, by Albert Reynolds and his successor, John Bruton, Prime Minister Major. The February 28th announcement by the Governments was a milestone achievement. A firm date has been set for all party talks. And that is, after all, what we have all been working for. Violence has no place in this process. The cease-fire has got to be restored.

We Americans who so proudly call ourselves Irish must speak with one voice on this issue. Those of you who stood with me when we took the first steps here that no American Government has taken before, you especially, must speak with one voice on this issue. The future must belong to those who build, not those who maim and destroy. All the Irish-American community must, must urge our friends on the other side of the ocean to banish the specter of violence once and for all.

For our part, we will continue to work closely with the Irish and British Governments and the parties involved to support their efforts to end the violence and to achieve a lasting peace. From our battle of independence right down to the present day, the Irish have defended and built and blessed our Nation. Of all the gifts we can offer them in return, perhaps the most precious is the example of what can happen when people find strength instead of weakness in their diversity. We know it is hard to do, but we also reaped the richness of the prize.

We are proud to walk with those who seek peace, from Northern Ireland to the Middle East, to Bosnia, to Haiti, all across this planet. Our aim there, as everywhere, is not to impose peace. We couldn't do that even if we were asked to do so. People must make their own peace in their minds and in their hearts. But we know that America at this moment in time, and especially with regard to Ireland, can play a special role. We will keep our commitment to do all we can to create a climate for peace to take hold and to flourish, to stand with those who take risks for peace through the good times and the bad, to counter the forces of hatred and division wherever they appear.

Since the first settlers came to our shores, Irish, Protestant, and Catholic together have added to our strength. Tomorrow, as I'm sure most of you know, I leave on a different mission of peace. I'm going to Sharm al-Sheikh in Egypt, where leaders from the Middle East and around the world will stand as one for peace in the Middle East, together to combat the merchants of hatred with every means at our command, together to join our strength and our commitment to carry the peace process forward there.

We must not let the terrorists in the Middle East have the victory they seek, the death of the very hope for peace. I ask for your prayers on that mission, as well. The solidarity of peacemakers in this world today must be stronger than bullets or bombs. The will of the people for peace is more powerful than the impulse to division, and we must not stop until peace has been secured.

I have a better understanding now than I did when I went to Ireland of the long struggle within the souls of the Irish people over the last few decades. When I came home, having had the opportunity to meet Seamus Heaney, as he said in his letter to the Ambassador, I was profoundly honored that he autographed a copy of the "The Cure at Troy" for my wife, not for me—[laughter]—wisely picking the more literate in our family. [Laughter]

But for me he hand-wrote out the lines from that magnificent work that I spoke in Derry. And so I framed them and put them in my personal office at the White House, "The moment where hope and history

rhyme." And after I got back I asked a friend of mine who is a writer to get me a copy of Seamus Heaney's address upon receiving the Nobel Prize. And I read it. And if you have not read it, I commend it to you. It is an astonishing journey of the soul, a journey of personal courage, a fight against cynicism and giving up, a fight against the anger and anguish that comes from feeling impotent in the face of larger events.

I imagine it describes the same journey of the heart that our friend John Hume has taken in his own way over the last several years. I say that because the truth is, no one knows whether human nature craves dominance and division over peace and hope, but we all believe we know, and in the believing we can make a new reality.

We cannot let our children grow up in the world toward which we are moving, where events are unfolding at such a rapid pace and people are being thrown against each other with greater intensity than ever before, and huge decisions that involve the very survival of the ecostructure of the planet will have to be made. We cannot afford to let another generation of young people grow up believing that it's more important to define themselves in terms of who they are not, instead of what they are. And that, in the end, is the great struggle that every generation, that every nation, that every community, that every family, that every person must wage.

If we believe we are children of God, then what is important is what we are, not what we are not. And that is the gift that Irish-Americans must give to Ireland in our lifetime.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:58 p.m. in the ballroom at the Plaza Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to U.S. Ambassador to Ireland Jean Kennedy Smith; Niall O'Dowd, publisher, Irish America; John Hume, leader, Northern Ireland Social Democratic and Labor Party; former Prime Minister Albert Reynolds of Ireland; actors Anjelica Huston and Liam Neeson; Sinn Féin leader Gerry Adams; Prime Minister John Bruton of Ireland; and Prime Minister John Major of Great Britain.

**Remarks at a Democratic
Congressional Campaign Committee
Dinner in New York City**
March 11, 1996

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker—[*laughter*]*—it has a nice ring to it. Thank you, Dick Gephardt, for your words and for your work, and thank you for not losing heart in the last year and for helping me to carry on the struggle that we have fought in Washington.*

Thank you, Martin Frost, for your energy. When Martin Frost was up here announcing that this was the most successful event by the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee ever held outside Washington I thought, my God, even people in New York can't tell him no. [*Laughter*] Just anything to get him off the phone. [*Laughter*] I still don't know how many things are in Martin Frost's district just because I wanted to stop having him walk a dog to the bone. He's great. We are very fortunate to have Martin Frost in this position of leadership at this time, and I am making fun of him only because of my affection and admiration for him and for the efforts that he's made.

I thank Congressman Rangel and all the members of the New York delegation, all the members of the New Jersey delegation who are here; all the other officials, my former colleagues and good friends, Jim Florio and Mario Cuomo; and to all of you who have come to help in this important endeavor, thank you very much.

I was thinking tonight about what, if anything, I could say that you all haven't heard before, or whether I could say it in a different way. Some of you have heard me say this but a few years ago Tina Turner came to Little Rock to give a concert, and the man that ran the place where the concert was knew that I was a big Tina Turner fan so he gave me six tickets. And so I got up a bunch of my staff and we went to the concert. Normally, I had these tickets. When I got tickets they were carefully buried in the middle of the crowd so I wouldn't be noticed. The Governor doesn't like to be noticed at rock concerts. [*Laughter*]

This time, he put them on the front row. So there I was watching Tina Turner and that

tenor saxophone player of hers that looks like he could bench press 500 pounds on a cold day; and she gave the whole concert and at the end of the concert she sang her first big hit, "Proud Mary." And she started to sing it, the band was playing the introduction, the crowd started clapping and she said, "You know something? I've been singing this song for 25 years, and it gets better every time I sing it." [*Laughter*] So I was thinking, what can I say that would kind of replicate that? [*Laughter*]

You all know why you are here. What I'd like to do is to put it in some larger context. You heard Dick Gephardt say what I believe deeply to be the truth: The American people are living through the period of most profound change in the way we work since we moved from being an agricultural to an industrial society. And when you do that it changes the way you live, just as it did 100 years ago when we moved from the rural areas to cities and towns.

Now we are changing the way we work; we are changing the nature of the workplace; we are changing the nature of the global markets, and it's thrown everything up in the air. It is an age of enormous possibility, in which people expect those in public life to change in a manner that is appropriate to the challenges of the time. That is at least the consistent thread you can see in the recent elections.

Now in 1992 most people thought the race was between candidates who wished to have change in America and those who thought we were getting along all right just by going along. In 1996, the election will be between two very different visions of change. And it is very important that every American understand that. There is no status quo option in this election. There should not be a status quo option in this election, but the change could hardly be more profound than the two different visions offered in this election, as you can see now from 3 years of experience.

When I ran for President in 1992 I did it for pretty straightforward reasons: I wanted my country to go into the 21st century with the American dream available to every man and woman, every boy and girl, without regard to race, religion, or background, who was willing to work for it. I wanted to see